

Message Text

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ACTION OES-04

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SENV, OECD, GR

SUBJECT: FLUOROCARBON SURVEY: GREEK PERCEPTION OF FLUOROCARBON DANGER
S

REF: STATE 221996; ATHENS 7022; THESSALONIKI 0540 AND 545

1. UNTIL VERY RECENTLY LOCAL INTEREST IN ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION WAS PRACTICALLY NON-EXISTENT, BOTH WITHIN AND WITHOUT GOVERNMENT. PERCEPTION AND CONCERN OVER DANGERS OF FLUOROCARBONS REMAINS VERY LOW AT PRESENT AMONG PUBLIC AT LARGE AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. NO PLANS FOR NEW RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF FLUOROCARBONS IN GREECE ARE EVIDENT. NORTHERN GREECE HAS BEEN THE CENTER OF CONSIDERABLE CONCERN ONVER POSSIBLE POLLUTION BY THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY IN RECENT WEEKS DUE TO A CONTROVERSY OVER ALLEGEDLY DANGEROUS LEAKAGE FROM THE STORAGE TANKS OF ETHYL HALLAS' LEAD ADDITIVE PLANT (SEE THESSALONIKI REFTELS). IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER CONCER WILL BE TRANSFERRED TO OTHER CHEMICAL PRODUCERS.

2. GREEK MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY POLLUTION EXPERTS HAVE SOME APPRECIATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS OF FLUOROCARBON PRODUCTION AND USE. WITH RESPECT TO NEW PRODUCTION FACILITIES OF CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES OF NORTHERN GREECE, ONLY STANDARD ANTI-POLLUTION MEASURES APPLIED GENERALLY THROUGHOUT INDUSTRIAL SECTOR WERE PRESCRIBED AS A CONDITION OF GOVERNMENT APPROVAL OF PLANT. MINISTRY WILL CHECK ON COMPANY'S
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COMPLIANCE WITH THESE REGULATIONS, AND EVALUATE THEIR

ADEQUACY SHORTLY AFTER PRODUCTION COMMENCES, AND RESERVES
RIGHT TO IMPOSE NEW STRICTURES IF THEY APPEAR NECESSARY.

3. MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY DIRECTOR GENERAL KATSOULIS HAS
INDICATED INTEREST IN RECEIVING FROM EMBASSY ANY AVAILABLE
INFORMATION ON TERMS OF OPERATION OF SUCH PLANTS IN US, AND
ON METHODS OF TESTING FOR AIR POLLUTION CAUSED BY THEM. TO
BE OF MAXIMUM USE SUCH MATERIAL SHOULD BE AIRPOUCHED ASAP.
KUBISCH

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